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## The Welsh in Iowa

Ron Roberts

*University of Northern Iowa*

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Sutton's focus is historical, although he does include communities founded as late as the 1970s. His selection seems a bit arbitrarily confined to communities, such as Jesus People USA and Reba Place, that are located in his home state of Illinois. Oddly, his chapter on "Chicago Area Utopias" excludes any mention of Cyrus Teed's Koreshan Unity, certainly one of the most interesting utopian movements to develop in the American heartland.

*Heartland Utopias* will, one hopes, not be the final attempt to explore the interesting history of utopian communities in Iowa and neighboring states. The errors of fact and interpretation in this work seriously compromise what might have been a useful regional exploration of this rich topic. Many of these errors should have been detected by careful peer review; others probably would have been addressed had the author been able to see the book through publication.

*The Welsh in Iowa*, by Cherilyn A. Walley. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009; distributed in the U.S. by University of Chicago Press. xi, 238 pp. Maps, graphs, tables, notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$60.00 cloth.

Reviewer Ron Roberts is professor emeritus of sociology at the University of Northern Iowa. His books include *The New Communes; Social Movements; Iowa's Ethnic Roots; Reinventing Inequality; John L. Lewis; and Mother Jones and Her Sisters*.

This new book on the migrations and settlement patterns of the Welsh in Iowa has all the strengths and weaknesses of a doctoral dissertation for the general reader of Iowa's ethnic history. Walley notes that Welsh mining towns and Welsh agricultural communities in Iowa in the nineteenth century shared the same cultural values and often the same language, but in both cases the Welsh were always a minority within the community. It is also true that they never presented a political threat (real or contrived) to the social order as did the Irish. Yet the Welsh did make an impact on midwestern states such as Iowa, and Walley meticulously documents their settlement in the state. She marshals an extraordinary amount of local history in her quest to tell the variegated story of the mining and farming communities inhabited by the Welsh.

I must admit to having at least two disparate views of her work. On the one hand, her descriptions of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Welsh mining towns could not find a better audience. My grandfather and his family worked for many years in the Monroe County coal mines near Hiteman. One of the other Welsh towns she describes is Cleveland, Iowa, which happens to be the birthplace of

my father (in 1906) as well as America's most famous labor leader, John Llewellyn Lewis (in 1880). She does a great service by revivifying these lost mining towns that were havens for Welsh miners and their families. Their communities are gone now, identified only by their extant graveyards.

My gratitude and appreciation for this detailed and precise treatise on the Welsh migrants to Iowa is shaded by the recognition that Walley's work was obviously a doctoral dissertation. As such it is a project she can be proud of. For the average reader, however, the demographic material that constitutes the skeleton of the book may be somewhat overwhelming. The dissertation's demographic methodology might have been cushioned by more examples from the actual lives of individual Welsh men and women. For example, members of the Iowa Welsh Society have done oral histories of Welsh settlers in the agricultural community of Old Man's Creek, and I have done oral histories of second-generation Welsh people in Lucas and Monroe counties. Moreover, a fascinating diary kept by Evan G. Morgan gives an account of his mine work in Lucas as well as his dreams at the turn of the century. He also describes his two trips back to Wales in the early twentieth century to do missionary work. Furthermore, a number of newspapers of the 1880s give accounts of Welshmen as leaders in the coal strikes in Lucas and Monroe counties. Interestingly enough, *The National Labor Tribune* in Pittsburgh followed the story of Welsh union men on strike and conflict over African American strikebreakers in Lucas in 1880.

Assiduous readers will appreciate the scope and methodological clarity of Walley's work. One hopes that a second edition of the book will add more of the hymns, curses, diet, celebrations, and quotidian realities of early Welsh life in Iowa.

*Norwegian Handknits: Heirloom Designs from Vesterheim Museum*, by Sue Flanders and Janine Kosel. Minneapolis: Voyageur Press, 2009. 144 pp. Illustrations (mostly color), diagrams, references, index. \$30.00 cloth.

Reviewer Linda McShannock is costume and textile curator at the Minnesota Historical Society. She has written about eighteenth-century Norwegian quilts in America and curated quilt exhibits at the Minnesota Historical Society.

In *Norwegian Handknits*, designers Sue Flanders and Janine Kosel selected knitted items from the Vesterheim's textile collection to recreate in both traditional form and modern interpretation. Vesterheim is a well-known museum in Decorah, Iowa, that preserves Norwegian